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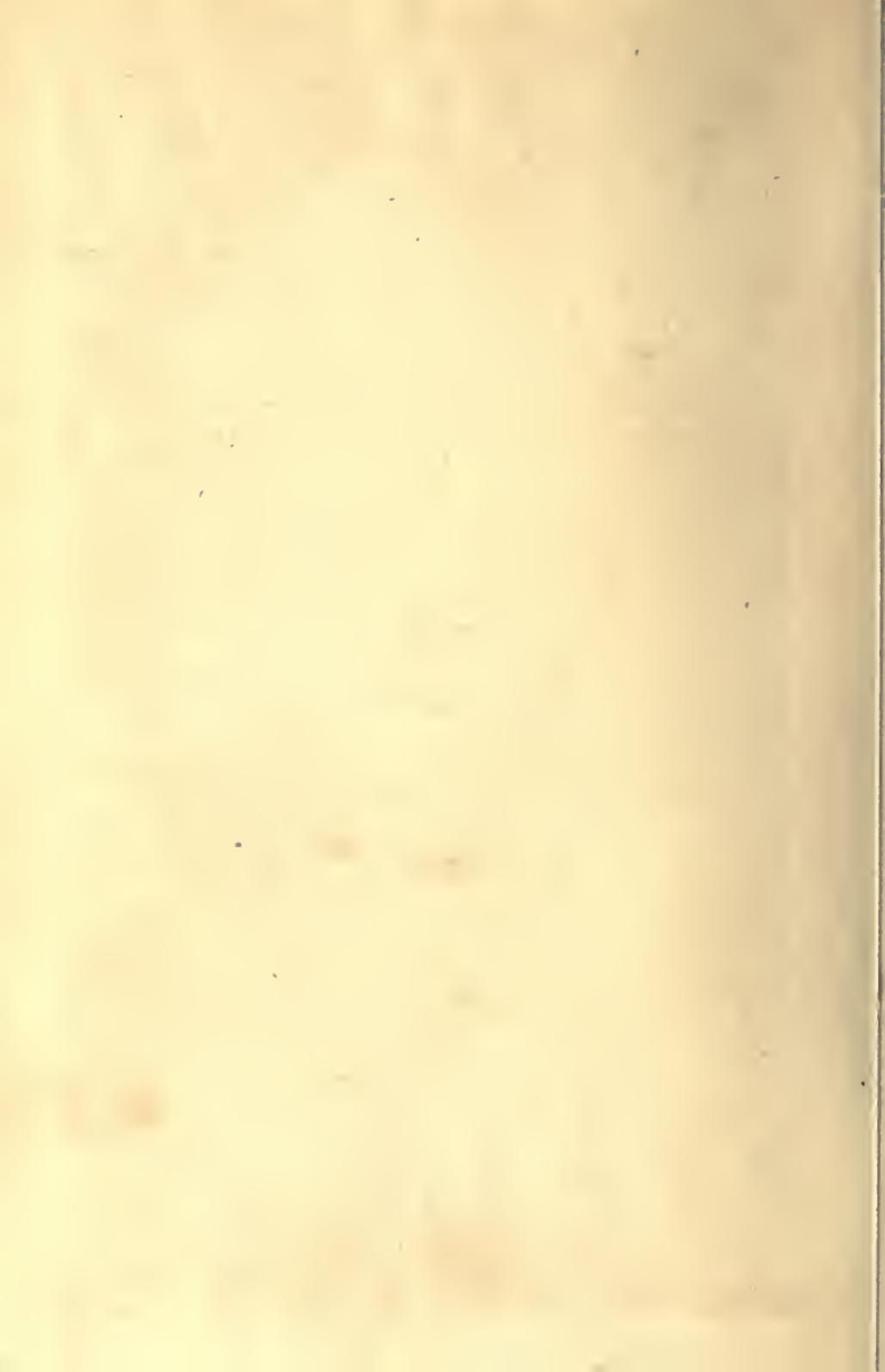
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ARTMOOR PRISONS.



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DARTMOOR PRISON:

Past and Present.





OUTER GATE.

DARTMOOR PRISON:

Past and Present.

BY

CAPTAIN VERNON HARRIS,
GOVERNOR. 4



PLYMOUTH:
WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON,
GEORGE STREET.

RR

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DARTMOOR PRISON.

THE WAR PRISON.

“That proud pile where England held
Within her victor-gripe the vanquished foe!
O here full many a blooming cheek was blenched,
O here full many a gallant heart was quelled
By stern captivity; protracted till
Hope almost ceased to bless the drooping brave!”

CARRINGTON.



HE early days of the present century saw Europe overrun with the victorious legions of Napoleon, whose next mission was the subjugation of England. This resolve of the French dictator-general led England, which had been in conflict with France from 1789 to 1802, to make cause against the common enemy of the Continent; and from 1803, the year before the flotilla made rendezvous at Boulogne for the invasion of Great Britain, till the decisive battle of Waterloo in 1815, British armies and British fleets were, with slight intermission and almost invariable success,

engaged against Napoleon's forces. During this protracted war great numbers of French soldiers and sailors were taken prisoners. The finding of accommodation for so many was a source of great trouble and expense ; and the embarrassment of the government was largely increased by having to provide for the prisoners taken during the second American war of 1812. At first the prisoners were berthed on board hulks moored in some of the harbours of the south-west coast. The numbers so increased, however, that the danger of keeping so many hostile fighting men in our naval arsenals, in case of invasion or attack, was recognized as very great. Further than that, attention was drawn to the great prevalence of sickness among the men imprisoned in the old ships set apart for their use. The men so confined also continually gave trouble ; now, as in the prison hulks of the Hamoaze, by setting fire to the ships in the hope of escaping during the confusion ; and now by cutting through bulk-heads and decks, and seizing shore boats made fast to the boom, or accommodation ladders. The result of a consideration of these difficulties was a determination to remove all prisoners of war from the sea-ports to certain fixed stations inland ; and the first and largest of the war prisons thus called into existence was that established in the west quarter of the forest of Dartmoor, at an elevation of 1,400 feet above the sea-level.

The site of the prison was selected by a Commissioner sent from the Transport Board, who, after inspecting many favourable situations with Mr. Alexander, the architect, finally fixed upon the hamlet of Princetown as

the most suitable position for the purpose. The reasons given for its selection were: "Water excellent and plentiful; the soil gravel, peat for fuel abundant, with convenient access to the high road, and an abundant supply of granite for building." We learn further that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales "gave as many acres as were required by the Board, so that the possibility of a garden for vegetables is an additional consideration which is likely to tend to the health and comfort of the prisoners."

The proposed site was finally determined upon mainly through the exertions of Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, Lord Warden of the Stannaries, who had taken a keen interest in the reclamation of the moorland, and who himself laid the foundation-stone of the prisons on March 20th, 1806. The original buildings and boundary walls cost about £130,000; and they were reported as finished in December, 1808. Many additions were afterwards made by the prisoners, who were employed as skilled labourers at a fixed rate of pay. The general plan consisted of ranges of stone buildings three stories in height, radiating from a central point. The buildings, seven in number, were enclosed at a distance of forty feet by a circular line of palisading, made of stout iron bars with sharp points. Beyond this obstacle were two walls fourteen feet high and twenty-two feet apart, the whole establishment being surrounded by a military road, from which the fixed stages for the sentries overlooking the yards were reached by flights of steps.

The interior of each block was arranged into two long rooms for sleeping, while the top story was reserved as a

living-room during the day, and for use when the weather would not admit of exercise in the open air. The floors resembled the decks of a ship, being constructed of hard timbers with caulked seams. The buildings were allotted as far as possible to the different nationalities, the French showing a great disposition to keep to themselves. The negroes taken in American ships were separated entirely from the rest, and occupied a distinct building (No. 4).* The aversion shown by the whites to these men was so marked that they could not be induced to associate with them under any conditions, and it was found necessary to insist upon a most rigorous separation in order to prevent collisions between them.

The variety of the nationalities was greatly added to by the fact that many of the prisoners taken from the Dutch ships (Holland being in league with Napoleon) were Eurasians, Malays, and Chinese, in the service of the Dutch East India Company, so that Asia was tolerably well represented in the unique community gathered together on Dartmoor. There were also many Danes who had been pressed into Napoleon's service, and they earned an excellent character during their enforced sojourn in this country. One writer, whilst mentioning that the Danish prisoners on parole expressed themselves dissatisfied with their allowance on hearing that the English prisoners in Denmark had two shillings a day and lodgings gratis, double what they were receiving, added that they were "very quiet and orderly in their behaviour."

* *Princetown.* By H. S. Hill.

The daily ration of the prisoners consisted of 1 lb. bread, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh beef, $\frac{1}{4}$ pint peas, and $\frac{1}{8}$ oz. salt. On Friday fish was substituted for those who desired it. In addition to the government ration, the men were permitted to buy such small luxuries as their means would afford. In *Additions to Risdon* it is stated: "A segment cut off from the inner circle provides a suitable space for holding the daily market, and into this portion of the grounds the country people are admitted, who supply vegetables and such other things as the prisoners purchase to add to the fare provided for them." We find that the quality of the provisions was the subject of frequent enquiry, and that the method to be followed in cooking them was minutely laid down. The disposal of the rations by the prisoners was a source of constant annoyance. "They were," says the Commissioner, "in the habit of selling or gambling away their clothing and rations of provisions, and have thereby reduced themselves to a state of debility so as to render their death inevitable." As a partial remedy for these evils, yellow clothing was issued to those who were detected in selling clothing; but "the acts of gambling where men can toss up privately, or by the length of a straw pulled from their beds decide whether they shall take or lose their rations for days, and in some instances for weeks to come, are circumstances which no care can prevent." When they were discovered in gambling away bread or food, the whole was seized from the winners or purchasers and distributed among the prisoners at large. A reward of ten guineas was offered for the conviction of any

person purchasing clothing. As a further check upon this practice superintendents were afterwards appointed from among the prisoners in each room, who were allowed threepence a day each, for preserving order and regularity, and for preventing the sale of provisions and clothing.

In spite of these stringent rules the habit of gambling was so inveterate that any thing was made to serve for the purpose, from the number of turns taken by a sentry on the walls in a given time, to the curls in the doctor's wig. Among the methods employed, the following for gaming by night had certainly the merit of originality, and revealed a fertility of invention characteristic of the French nation. When the lights were extinguished, and the ship's lantern alone cast a dim glimmer through the long room, the rats were accustomed to show themselves in search of the rare crumbs to be found below the hammocks. A specially tempting morsel having been placed in an open space, the arrival of the performers was anxiously looked for. They were all known by name, and thus each player was able to select his champion for the evening. As soon as a certain number had gained the open, a sudden whistle given by a disinterested spectator sent them back to their holes, and the first to reach his hole was declared the winner. An old grey rat called "*Père Ratapon*" was a great favourite with the gamblers; for, though not so active as his younger brethren, he was always on the alert to secure a good start when disturbed.

Although the necessities of the times obliged the





FRENCH WAR PRISON. "No. 3."

Admiralty to employ the parole system to a large extent, a considerable proportion remained of men who from their general conduct could not safely be entrusted with so much liberty of action, and who were in consequence always confined within the walls. As the capacity of the prison was on a very extensive scale, the life among its 10,000 inmates of various nationalities and creeds must have presented an endless variety of incidents, very different from the enforced order which prevails in somewhat similar institutions at the present day. Among those who did not possess sufficient skill or training to be employed in the enlargement of the buildings, the construction of fancy articles, toys, and games, served to break the monotony of daily life, and added somewhat to their slender resources. We read that "an inner court contains a covered piazza furnished with gratings, through which the prisoners on certain days are permitted to traffic, with such small articles as their ingenuity leads them to produce from the apparently unpromising materials afforded by old boxes, waste paper, and slips of straw. By apt contrivance they construct from these, workboxes, dinner-mats, hand-screens, and various ornaments suited to the taste of the fair inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, who crowd to make purchase of the prisoners' wares."* The Commissioner reported on one occasion that "the prisoners employ their leisure in making trinkets; and as a proof that the situation of the prisoners in general is not so miserable as it has been represented, it is not unusual for men to sell their turn

* R. Evans.

of exchange for trifling sums of money when an embarkation is about to take place." Again, "They are allowed to sell any kind of article of their own manufacture (except straw hats, which would interfere with the revenue), by which some have been known to earn and take away on release a hundred pounds each." Some of the industries exercised were of a more doubtful character, as we find that the prisoners excelled in producing good imitations of the coins in use, notably the eighteen-penny and three-shilling pieces then current.* Forged bank notes were also issued, and were disposed of by some of the less scrupulous among the soldiers, who to the number of five hundred formed the permanent guard of the prison.

The American prisoners gained an unenviable notoriety by their general misconduct, and were more discontented with their fare and treatment. This was owing to the fact that many of them were in reality Englishmen,† who had been compelled, or induced by high bounties, to ship in American privateers. Privateering was clearly the great feature in the maritime warfare of the period, as hardly a day passed without some ship of this description being taken by the Royal cruisers. The depôts

* *Princetown.* By H. S. Hill.

† James's *Naval History* states that when the United States frigate *Macedonian* was captured, every seaman on board the American ship had served from five to twelve years in a British man-of-war. One of the guns on board the *Macedonian* was called the "Victory," because its crew had served under Lord Nelson in that ship. Another gun was called the "Nelson," because the gun's crew had belonged to his barge.

were full of privateers—men who were, from the daring reckless nature of their calling, the most dangerous class among the war prisoners. They were always ready for outbreak, and gave much trouble before they were got to shore. We read in an official report, “On the evening of the 5th May, between the hours of 5 and 6 p.m., when the privateer’s crew were allowed to come on deck, and the gratings had been taken off for that purpose (two cooks cleaning kettles and two others drawing water being also on deck), a sudden rush was made without the least indication of any such intention; the sentries on the hatchway were seized, and in a moment the prisoners from below poured up in a torrent which overwhelmed everything.” The officer in command continues: “I was in the cabin when the alarm was given, and immediately running on deck, was knocked down with a handspike. An attack then commenced upon the cabin, where we defended ourselves for an hour. We then found means of giving a signal of alarm from one of the stern ports to the *Elizabeth*, transport, when Captain James ordered two guns loaded with grape to be fired into us, which assisted us in gaining possession of the deck.”

The following narrative by a Frenchman* explains the hazardous nature of “cutting out” expeditions, and the hardships to which sailors, frequently compelled to serve against their will, were exposed: “The frigate having seized us with her grappling-irons, we were exposed to the fier of her artillery, and our bench, on which were five convicts and a Turkish slave, happened

* *Mémoires d'un Protestant*. Religious Tract Society.

to be just opposite to one of the guns of the frigate, which I perceived to be loaded. Our broadsides were touching, consequently this gun was so near to us that by raising myself a little I could have touched it with my hand. This unpleasant neighbour made us all tremble. My companions lay down quite flat, thus thinking to escape its fire. On examining this cannon, I perceived, from the manner in which it was pointed, that its discharge would bear directly upon our bench, and that, lying down, we must receive it upon our bodies. Having made this observation, I determined to stand straight up on my bench. I could not get away, I was chained to it; what else could I do? I must resign myself to pass under the fire of this cannon! As I was attentive to all that was passing on board the frigate, I saw the gunner, with his lighted match in his hand, begin to touch the gun at the bows of the frigate with the fire, and then go from gun to gun till he came to the one which pointed upon our vessel. I then lifted up my heart to God, and uttered a short but fervent prayer, as a man who expects the stroke of death. I could not take my eyes off this gunner, who kept gradually approaching our gun as he applied his match in succession to the others. Now he came to this fatal gun; I had the courage to watch him put the portfire to the gun, still standing straight up, and commending my soul to my Saviour. The cannon fired; I was suddenly stunned and thrown prostrate, not upon the bench, but in the centre of the galley, as far off as my chain could extend. Here I lay, stunned and unconscious, stretched across the body of the lieutenant, who

was killed, for I know not how long ; but I imagine it must have been a considerable time. At last, however, I regained my senses. Raising myself from the lieutenant's body, I returned to my bench. It was night, and I saw neither the blood nor the carnage which was upon the bench, by reason of the darkness. I first thought that my comrades were still lying down for fear of the cannon. I did not know that I was wounded, feeling no pain, and I said to my comrades, 'Get up, lads, the danger is over.' But I received no answer. The Turk on the bench, who had been a janissary, and who boasted that he was never afraid, remaining prostrate like the others, I said jokingly, 'What, Isouf, this is the first time you have been afraid! come, get up!' and at the same time I took him by the arm to help him. But oh, horror! which makes me still shudder when I think of it, his arm, separated from his body, remained in my hand. With terror I let fall the arm of this unhappy fellow, and perceived that he as well as the four others were literally hewn in pieces ; for all the shot from the gun had fallen upon them. I sat down upon the bench.

"I had not been long in that attitude when I felt something cold and damp streaming down upon my body, which was naked. I put my hand to it, and felt directly that it was wet, but could not in the darkness distinguish if it was blood. But I soon found that it was, and streaming from a large wound which went quite through my left shoulder. I felt another on my left leg, below the knee, as deep as the one in my shoulder,

and a third, nearly a foot long and four inches broad, in my stomach. I was losing an immense quantity of blood, without being able to get assistance from any one, all around me being dead, as well in my bench as in the two adjoining ones, so that of the eighteen men who were in those three benches I alone had escaped with my three wounds; and all this slaughter had been caused by one cannon! This will easily be understood when I mention that these guns were charged up to the muzzle, first with cartridge-powder, then a long tin box, in size varying according to the calibre of the gun, filled with large musket-balls and old pieces of iron. When they fired these guns the box broke, the balls and grape-shot spread in an incomprehensible manner, and caused a fearful carnage. I was then obliged to wait for assistance till the combat was over, and order could be restored; for everything on board the galley was in a frightful state of disorder. No one knew who was dead, wounded, or alive; we heard only the piercing cries of the wounded, of whom there were a large number.

“The *coursier*, which is the deck or gangway passing down the middle of the galley from one end to the other, and is about four feet broad, was so encumbered with dead bodies that we could not pass over it. The rowers’ benches were for the most part equally full of the bodies, not only of convicts, but of sailors, soldiers, and officers, either dead or wounded, so that the living and unhurt could scarcely move, either to throw the dead into the sea, or to help the wounded. Add to this

the darkness of the night, and that we dared not light either torches or lanterns, fearing to be seen from the coast, and lest the ships of war which were in the Thames should pursue us. Our galley was in a terrible state of chaos and confusion, which lasted far into the night, when, the combat being ended by the surrender of the frigate, things were arranged as best they could be. The other five galleys helped us, replacing our dead and wounded, as well as the oars and equipments which we had lost; for they had not endured nearly so much loss or injury as we had done. They worked diligently, but as silently as possible, to put us in order. I say silently, and without light; for we saw lights proceeding from the Thames, and heard several signal guns, which we thought proceeded from ships of war which were coming to look after us.

“The first thing done on board our galley was to throw the dead into the sea, and carry the wounded into the hold. But God knows how many wretches were thrown into the sea as dead who were not really so; for in this darkness and confusion they took for dead those who had only fainted, either through fear or loss of blood from their wounds. I found myself in this extremity; for when the *argousins* came to my bench to unchain the dead and wounded I had fallen down in a fainting-fit, and lay motionless and unconscious among the others, bathed in their blood and my own. These *argousins* at once concluded that all belonging to this bench were dead. They only unchained them and threw them into the sea, without further examining

whether they were dead or alive; it was quite enough if they did not hear them cry out or speak. These obsequies were so hastily performed that a bench was emptied in a moment. All my four comrades who were slain were frightfully mangled. I was the only one who was whole, but buried and prostrate in this carnage, making no movement nor sound. They unchained me to throw me into the sea, judging me to be dead. Now it must be remembered that I was chained by the left leg, and that it was in this leg I was wounded. One *argousin* seized me by this leg to drag me up, while another was unfastening the bolt of the iron ring which held my chain. The latter, happily for me, put his hand upon my wound, which caused me so great pain that I raised a great cry, and I heard the *argousin* say, 'This man is not dead;' and imagining at once that they were going to throw me into the sea, I exclaimed (for this pain had brought back my consciousness), 'No, no; I am not dead.' They took me down to the bottom of the hold among the other wounded, and threw me down upon a cable. What a strange place of repose for a wounded man, agonised with pain!

"We who were wounded were all cast pell-mell into the hold—sailors, soldiers, officers, and convicts, without any distinction, laid down upon the hard boards, and receiving no help or relief; for, on account of there being so many wounded, the surgeons could attend to but few. As to myself, I was three days in this terrible place without having my wounds dressed, only a little camphored brandy being applied to stop the bleeding,

without any bandage or further treatment. The wounded died like flies in this horrible hold, where there was a stifling heat and dreadful stench, so that gangrene set in on most of our wounds. In this state we arrived, three days after the battle, in the roadstead of Dunkirk."

The Commissioner on one occasion reports "that the captains of privateers, who are confined as well as their men, are much vexed from the want of distinction, which I find is not so displeasing to their crews, as it accords with their professed system of equality and debasement of all privileged orders."

No restrictions appear to have been placed upon the amusements of the prisoners during their hours of leisure as long as gambling in any form was avoided. For some time foils were allowed for purposes of recreation; but it was found that among a community trained to arms the least provocation led to the guard button at the point being removed, and the harmless toy converted into a very good imitation of a "small sword." The evil grew to such an extent that the use of foils was forbidden. This had the effect of putting a stop to hostile meetings for some time; but at length a serious quarrel between a corporal of Marines and a privateer's man led to the invention of the following expedient. The carpenters employed in building the Roman Catholic Chapel, were commissioned to select two splinters from the hard wood forming the roof, of a sufficient length, and to these were fitted knife blades reduced to the requisite dimensions, the guard at hilt being formed of tin. The meeting took place in due course, and the Marine received a severe

gash on the sword arm, and was also run through the shoulder. The lame story told at the Infirmary as to the cause of (what the patient called) "the accident," led to the discovery and confiscation of the weapons used.

Attempts to escape were frequent, and generally took the form of mining beneath the walls. This was doubtless due to the fact that a large proportion of the men were more or less trained in defensive engineering works, and would naturally make use of their skill and experience in endeavouring to get free.

The Commissioner reported on one occasion: "The case of a poor boy called Philip Hamond, about fourteen or fifteen years of age, calls for commiseration. This lad was born at Guernsey, and was pressed by a French privateer, which was taken by one of His Majesty's cruisers. The prisoners began a mine, which they carried under the foundations for about forty yards, at a depth of five feet below the surface and about four feet in diameter, towards the outer walls, to which they had nearly approached. They were unable to work in a straight line on account of the boulders which they came upon in the gravel, and were frequently obliged to make a considerable deviation in order to turn these obstacles. The tools used were wooden spades with an edge of tin, cask hoops, and old iron made into scrapers. The earth taken daily from the mine had been concealed below the floor, and had also been taken out to the gardens in small quantities with ashes and refuse. The boy Hamond, observing earth concealed and distributed in

several places, became alarmed, lest he himself should become involved in a dangerous venture, and secretly informed the authorities. Upon the discovery of the plot the prisoners rose in a body, and arming themselves with daggers made of old nails, iron wire, and pieces of glass fitted into wooden handles, they would instantly have made the boy the object of their vengeance if he had not taken refuge under the bayonets of the guard, which was called in to suppress the rising."

An ingenious escape was effected by a young man of good education who was taken on board a privateer, where he had been (after the manner of the times) pressed to serve, at the last moment before sailing, to make up the required complement. He was of fair complexion, and had made himself useful in carrying out repairs in the houses of the superior officers, with great intelligence. One day while engaged in making alterations to a cupboard in the doctor's house, he succeeded in gaining the confidence of one of the maid servants, and with her assistance secured the naval uniform of her master (including the cocked-hat and sword). As the hour for evening roll-call drew near, he succeeded in putting the finishing touches to the pig-tail which completed his disguise, and without being observed gained the high road to Plymouth before his absence was discovered, and ultimately reached France in safety. So cool was he in making his arrangements that he did not forget the doctor's snuff-box and silver-headed cane, which he is said afterwards to have returned with many acknowledgments.

All attempts to escape were not so successful as this ; for in the nominal rolls the word "drowned" appears with ominous frequency under the head of "final disposal." The explanation probably is, that while attempting to escape, the unhappy men were drowned in endeavouring to cross some one of the many tributaries of the Dart, Tavy, and Walkham when in flood, being ignorant of the speed and volume of moorland streams during heavy rains.

Many escapes were carried out by scaling the walls during the tempestuous nights of winter. This was prevented to a great extent by placing a continuous line of thin wire along the outer wall and connecting it with bells placed in the sentry-boxes of the soldiers on duty. A clever attempt was once made by a young French sergeant, who, observing that the soldiers on guard were in the habit of passing the gate for the purpose of drawing drinking water from a spring in one of the yards, conceived the idea of turning the practice to account. When at work near the guard-house he possessed himself of a cap and great coat belonging to a soldier on duty, and conveyed them inside the prison in a vegetable basket. At dusk, just before the evening recall, he presented himself at the gate in his newly-acquired garments, and armed with a bucket of spring-water, in the hope that no question would be asked him as he passed the barrier. In order to affect as much unconcern as possible, it occurred to him that it would assist him if he could whistle at the moment of passing the gate-keeper, and thus avoid any chance of conversation. The

only air which he knew well enough to venture upon at such a trying moment was the "Marseillaise," the high notes of which struck the gatekeeper as being so peculiar that he gruffly remarked, "What do you call that?" when the prisoner, not understanding what was said, and imagining that his identity was challenged, sprang at the throat of the astonished inquirer, and endeavoured to take the key from his hand. In this he was unsuccessful, and the two were found shortly afterwards engaged in a fierce struggle on the floor of the lodge.

A boy of about sixteen years of age, of youthful appearance, escaped in the disguise of a female, having been furnished with clothes by one of the girls attending the market. The dress used was afterwards found on the road to Moretonhampstead. It is said that in descending from the wall during the night he alighted on the sentry-box used by the night-watchman, who complained next morning of the severity of the hail showers, which had nearly overturned his watch-box!

Among the most noteworthy of the endeavours made to seize "*ce biiou rayonnant nommé la clef des champs*" the following is perhaps the most remarkable for ability of execution: A man of about thirty years of age, who had acquired some knowledge of mason's work, was employed with several others in building the rectory-house in Princetown. They were engaged upon the breastwork of a flue intended for open fire-places; and as soon as the work had been brought to a convenient height, a recess was formed in the thickness of the wall corresponding to the space occupied by a man's body,

the outer face being filled in with thin stone selected beforehand for the purpose. The flue, after being carried up above the recess at the original thickness, was rendered in mortar, care being taken to leave sufficient openings for air and observation. During the afternoon of the day fixed upon for the attempt the prisoner concealed himself in this hiding-place, and was built up by his companions. They took so much pains to ensure a creditable appearance as to draw forth the commendations of the instructor, who complimented them upon the improved face put on the work. The man being missed at evening roll-call, strict search among the buildings was made; but as the even surface of the bare walls seemed to offer no possible hiding-place, the investigation was abandoned, after several vigorous bayonet thrusts in the interior of the flue had been given. The general opinion among the guard was that the prisoner must have eluded the vigilance of the sentries posted round the house during the day, and thus made good his escape. As night drew on the prisoner, observing that all was again quiet, easily removed the green work with which he was surrounded, and succeeded in making off without attracting attention. The condition of the wall on the following morning pointed clearly to the stratagem that had been so successfully carried out.

The penalty incurred by failure in these attempts was heavy. If detected, the culprit was afterwards confined in a strong building, 30 ft. by 20 ft., called "the dungeon," which was built in the shape of a dome springing from

the ground line, of enormous blocks of hewn stone clamped together with iron, through which it was impossible to break. The floor was composed of large boulders, which from their weight alone rendered the process of mining quite hopeless. The interior was lighted by small openings about ten feet from the ground, through which faint rays penetrated. The entrance was secured by massive double doors of iron, studded with square-headed rivets to add to their solidity, and armed with a formidable array of bolts and fastenings. The following lines* were written on a young prisoner confined in this building for attempting to escape :

“ Oh set me free!
 I am young in years,
 And my heart repines,
 Though I shed no tears.
 My spirit was formed for joy and glee;
 It still is buoyant; ‘oh set me free!’

“ Oh set me free!
 I am strong and bold;
 Scarce fifteen summers
 Have o’er me rolled.
 Unfettered once as the boundless sea,
 I am pinioned now; ‘oh set me free!’

“ Oh set me free!
 I’ve a father true;
 He is bowed with age;
 Must I vainly sue?
 From your sharpest swords he would scorn to flee;
 But he mourns for his son; ‘oh set me free!’

* *Tavistock and its Vicinity.* By R. Evans. 1846.

“ Oh set me free !
 I ’ve a mother dear,
 Whose eyes are blinded
 With many a tear.

She prays for her child with bended knee ;
 Must her prayers be useless ? ‘ oh set me free ! ’

“ Oh set me free !
 I ’ve a sister fair ;
 Her brow is shaded
 With early care.

She calls for her brother by bower and lea,
 Yet has no reply ; ‘ oh set me free ! ’

“ Oh set me free !
 I ’ve a home so bright,
 With every beauty
 That glads the sight.

That home once sounded with revelry,
 And now it is silent ; ‘ oh set me free ! ’

“ Oh set me free !
 I ’ve companions brave ;
 Each one would perish
 His friend to save.

They wander in grief by our fav’rite tree ;
 Their pastimes are ended ; ‘ oh set me free ! ’

“ Oh set me free !
 This dungeon deep
 Is dark’ning round me ;
 I dare not sleep.

Unearthly forms in its gloom I see ;
 They are mocking my sorrow ; ‘ oh set me free ! ’

“ God, set me free !
 Thou alone canst save ;
 For human pity
 I vainly crave.

My spirit now longs for that liberty
 Which death alone yields ; ‘ God, set me free ! ’

“ My soul is free,
Though my heart is cold;
Mother, dear mother,
Your arms enfold.

Father, I perish for liberty;
Sister, your blessing; ‘ God sets me free ! ’ ”

Discontent would not unnaturally be bred among such a community and in such a place. “ Imagine the tyranny of ‘ perfide Albion ’ in sending human beings to such a place,” wrote M. Catel. “ For seven months in the year a ‘ vraie Sibérie.’ When the snows go away, the mists appear.” The writer without doubt did not much exaggerate in thus describing the prevailing features of the climate of the Moor, and he was but giving expression to the feelings of his compatriots, accustomed to a milder clime. The wish to end their weary imprisonment must have been uppermost, and they were therefore ready to seize on the slightest pretext that offered to secure its gratification. The condition was aggravated by the fact that when a “ cartel ” or exchange of prisoners was in course of preparation the authorities were guided in their selection by the physical condition of the individual, the question always present to their minds being, “ Is he likely to become an active enemy if released ? ” The consequence was that none but the aged and infirm were brought forward for exchange, and those to whom inactivity and confinement were most irksome were left behind. A great many of the Frenchmen cherished the fond hope that Napoleon would compass their release by the invasion of England, and this hope was sustained by reports circulated by the market people. The indul-

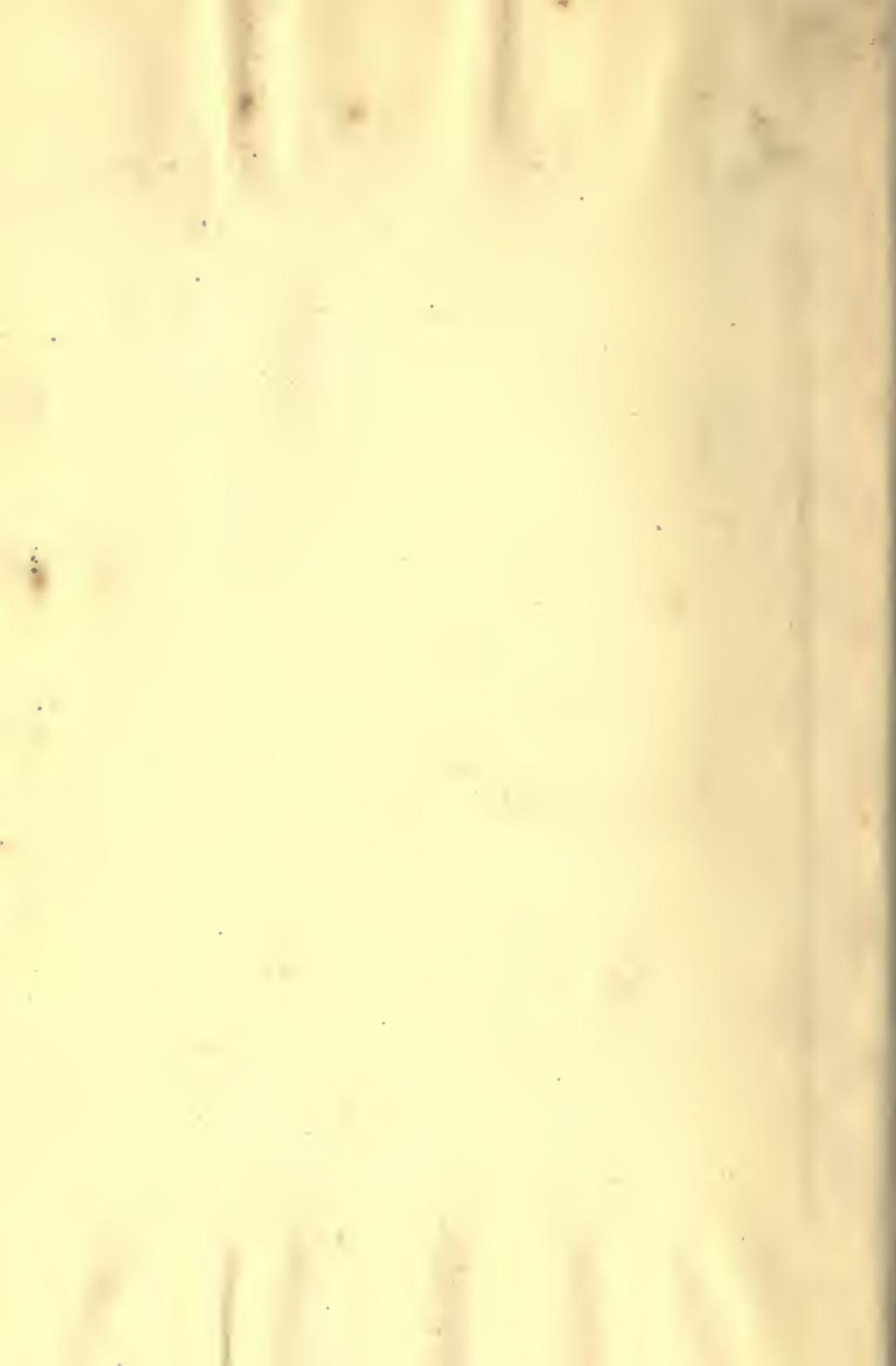
gence of this hope excited two generals who lived in the picturesque little cottage at Oakery Bridge,* just outside the prisons; for the Commissioner on one occasion reports: "Generals Rochambeau and Boyer are at present quiet. When the former thought that the invasion was at the point of being effected, he appeared two days in his grounds in full dress with boots and spurs. In their letters they amuse themselves by abusing 'Les mirmidons de transport service.'"

On two notable occasions the discontent of the prisoners developed into open revolt. In September, 1812, there was a dangerous outbreak, but happily it was quelled without bloodshed. The prisoners had shown symptoms of uneasiness for some days before, and had thus given warning of their intention. Upon the first indication of a rising two field guns were placed in position so as to command the main gateway, which afforded the only means of egress, thus rendering any further demonstration unavailing. A contemporaneous record thus described the affair: "An alarming insurrection of the prisoners of war took place in Dartmoor

* A little below the leat constructed for the supply of water to the town of Devonport. The Plymouth leat was made by Drake. "Sir Francis Drake was a munificent benefactor to Plymouth by causing a supply of fresh water to be brought to that town, from a distance of many miles, over the rocky and elevated lands of Dartmoor. On the completion of the leat, the mayor and corporation, dressed in their formalities, accompanied by Sir Francis, came out to meet the water, and followed the stream in procession, as it was for the first time permitted to flow into the town, whilst the ringing of bells and the discharge of cannon welcomed its arrival in full chorus." *Legends of Devonshire.* By Mrs. Bray. 1844.



COMMANDANT'S HOUSE, OAKERY BRIDGE.



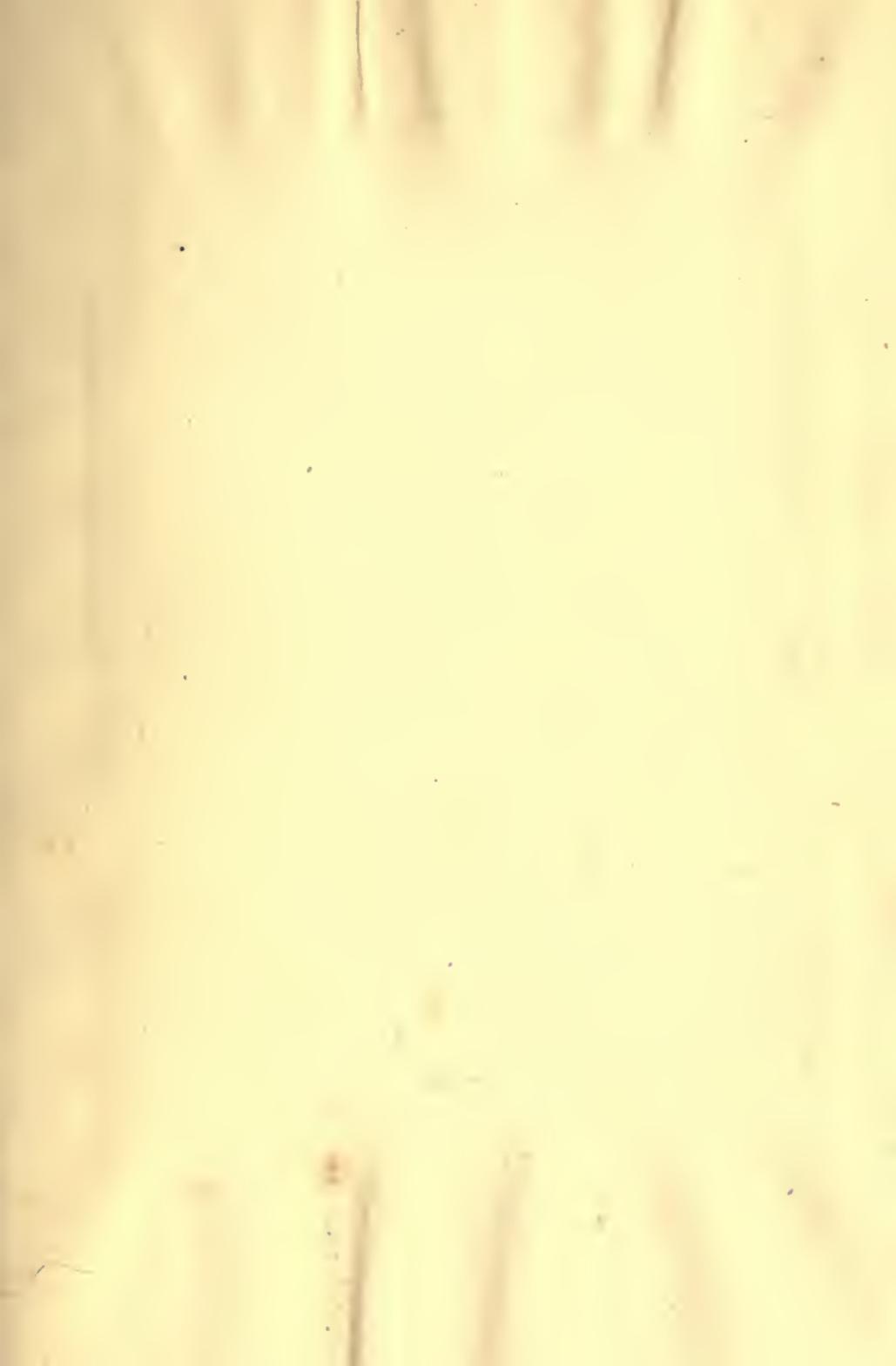
depôt. The bakehouses where their bread had been usually baked having been recently burned down, they were supplied with a daily allowance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of biscuit per man, which was afterwards reduced to 1 lb. Enraged at this, the prisoners, about 7,500 in number, became ungovernable, broke the enormous bars of the principal gate, and being unable to make their escape that way had in contemplation to set fire to the prison and effect their escape. Soon however they were surrounded by troops, and menaced by three pieces of artillery planted at the gate, and thus order was restored."

A much more serious outbreak took place on the evening of 6th April, 1815, which was not quelled without loss of life. Rumours of peace had become current throughout the country, and had probably received considerable additions from the gossip of the market people supplying the prisoners. These stories produced a spirit of reckless discontent, which culminated, upon the official announcement that the war was not over, in a general insurrection. The Americans made a determined dash at the main gate with a view to surprising the guard stationed there for its protection. The guard was promptly under arms, and received the assailants with a volley of musketry, which killed seven and wounded thirty-five of their number. Although the measures taken were undoubtedly severe, still there is every reason to suppose that the decided attitude of the soldiers on duty was the means of averting a much more serious calamity. This occurrence provoked considerable criticism at the time, and several accounts of it

were published. One Andrews, an American, who was present, published at New York, "A particular detail of all occurrences relative to the horrid massacre on the fatal evening of 6th April, 1815," and appended to it were the signatures of several of his fellow-prisoners, testifying to the truth of his story. Only three or four years since a New York paper noted the meeting, on the anniversary of the outbreak, at Boston, of a few of the survivors of the Dartmoor imprisonment, who evidently took Andrews's view of the incident.

In spite of the great numbers congregated within the walls at one time, and the severity of the climate, the mortality among the prisoners was less in proportion than that in any other town in England with an equal population. We read that "the crowded condition of the buildings, teeming with human life, produced an artificial atmosphere which tended to soften the rigours of the climate."* Sir George Magrath, who had medical charge in 1814, says: "The returns show that, with all the disadvantages of the climate, the health of the inmates equalled any war-prison in the country. Like most climates of extreme heat and cold, the new-comer required seasoning; and it was an every-day occurrence among the reprobate and incorrigible classes, who gambled away their clothing and rations, for individuals to be brought up to the receiving-room in a state of suspended animation. Measles and smallpox were common, and were very virulent among the Americans, chiefly from habits of indulgence from the ample funds which they had, and from the facilities

* ROWE'S *Perambulation of Dartmoor*.





FRENCH CEMETERY.

of obtaining spirits from the market-people, which no vigilance on the part of the authorities could suppress. Among the French the profligate were the only sufferers from cold."

Although the sanitary returns were on the whole satisfactory, still among so large a population there must have been a large proportion of fatal cases of sickness, when we think that the inhabitants were drawn for the most part from warm countries. Little attention appears to have been paid to the last resting-place of these unfortunates; for we read in the account published by R. Evans that "the burial-place of the unfortunate captives has been sadly neglected; the horses and cattle have broken up the soil, and left the bones of the dead to whiten in the sun." This state of things was no doubt due to the length of time during which the buildings remained unoccupied, and to insufficient protection from the ravages of the climate. This omission was supplied by Captain W. J. Stopford, who, when governor of the prison in 1865, collected the remains in two separate enclosures, and erected a monument to the memory of the prisoners of both the French and American nations. An acknowledgment received in the following year shows that this act of international courtesy was duly appreciated in France.







PAROLE.



IN order to increase the very limited accommodation at the disposal of the Transport Board, recourse was had to a system, which had existed in the previous century, of allowing the most trustworthy and orderly among the prisoners to reside on parole at certain towns appointed by the Board. The form in use was as follows :

“Whereas the Commissioners for conducting His Majesty’s Transport Service, and for the care and custody of French officers and sailors detained in England, have been pleased to grant “A. B.” leave to reside in ———, upon condition that he give his parole of honour not to withdraw one mile from the boundaries prescribed there without leave for that purpose from the said Commissioners ; that he will behave himself decently and with due regard to the laws of the kingdom ; and also that he will not either directly or indirectly hold

any correspondence with France during his continuance in England, but by such letter or letters as shall be shown to the agent of the said Commissioners under whose care he is or may be, in order to their being read and approved by his superiors ;—

“He does hereby declare that he, having given his parole of honour, will keep it inviolably.

“Signature, ——.”

In order to explain fully the conditions under which this indulgence was granted, a further notice was sent to the inhabitants of the towns selected for the residence of the prisoners.

“NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,

“That all such prisoners are permitted to walk or ride on the great turnpike-road within the distance of one mile from the extreme parts of the town (not beyond the bounds of the parish), and that if they shall exceed such limits, or go into any field or cross-road, they may be taken up and sent to prison, and a reward of ten shillings will be paid by the agent for apprehending them ; and further, that such prisoners are to be in their lodgings by five o'clock in the winter and eight o'clock in the summer months ; and if they stay out later they are liable to be taken up and sent to the agent for such misconduct. And to prevent the prisoners from behaving in an improper manner to the inhabitants of the town, or creating any riots or disturbances, either with them or among themselves, notice is also given that the Commissioners will cause, upon information being given

to their agent, any prisoner who shall so misbehave to be committed to prison.

“And such of the inhabitants who shall insult or abuse any of the prisoners of war on parole, or shall be found in any respect aiding or assisting in the escape of such prisoners, will be prosecuted according to law.”

After having a place of residence assigned to him, each prisoner received a fixed sum for maintenance, and he was also permitted to engage in any kind of business or occupation, and to employ any additional funds which he might possess. To superintend the behaviour of the prisoners an agent was appointed, who was visited periodically by a Commissioner from the Transport Board. In the West of England the following towns and places were set apart for prisoners on parole: Ashburton, Okehampton, Moretonhampstead, Tavistock, Bodmin, Launceston, Callington, Roscrow, Regilliack.

The conduct of these men at the several towns appears to have been satisfactory after they had become accustomed to the place to which they were sent. The Commissioner reports of one of these towns (Tavistock): “There are 150 prisoners on parole. No complaint was made of their conduct by the agent, nor could I find any from the inhabitants. At first they had been very unruly and troublesome, actuated with all the fervour of the revolutionary spirit of their countrymen, and zealous to proselyte others, and especially the lower classes, to their opinions. Some of them have made overtures of marriage to women in the neighbourhood, which the

magistrates have very properly taken pains to discourage."

Although intimate relations with the fair inhabitants were not permitted, we find that in some cases some of the prisoners' own countrywomen shared their captivity, as is shown by the following minute on a petition: "The Frenchwoman requests Sir Rupert George will interest himself in procuring rations for her child, who was born at the depôt, and is near five months old."

In spite of the stringent rules in force as to writing letters, we find that communication was kept up unknown to the agents by the post-boys passing between the various towns, and that escapes were consequently frequent. "The escapes made from the several depôts have been effected by means of vagabond musicians, Jews, and pretended Italian hawkers of pictures, images, and toys." These men were doubtless prisoners from neighbouring stations, who had assumed disguises with the purpose of facilitating the escape of their less fortunate brethren, who were not so well provided with means. The officers were notorious for their misconduct in this respect, and mention is frequently made of the successful evasions which they were instrumental in carrying out.





THE MODERN PRISON.

—◆—
“Prisoners torn
From evil ways and friends, and for their good
Confined with best intent to solitude.”

Lines by a Convict.

SOON after the battle of Waterloo, and the consequent declaration of peace in 1815, the very mixed population assembled on Dartmoor was quickly dispersed; the vast buildings, so long the scene of bustling life, were deserted; and the hulks used while the war lasted as receiving ships were again appropriated to ordinary offenders under long sentences, for some years afterwards. The following extract from a poem written by a prisoner in 1815 gives a vivid description of the kind of life led by a convict at that date, and shows clearly the necessity which existed for giving up so bad a system:

“When evening o’er the ship her shadow throws,
With aching heart I hear the hatches close.
On the same deck confined a various crew,
Employment various as their choice pursue

No keeper nigh their conduct to behold ;
Free are their words, their actions uncontrolled.
Here works are carried on of lawful trade,
Here implements of fraud and vice are made :
The coiner's hammer sounds upon the ear,
And picklock keys are manufactured here ;
Here sleepless gamblers pass in play the night,
Dispute for petty stakes, and swear and fight.
The purchased slave, his daily labours o'er,
Fatigued with toil, perhaps with lashes sore,
Enjoys at least some respite from his woes,
When on his bed his weary limbs he throws,
And sinking in night's friendly shade to rest,
Sleeps undisturbed, and in his dreams is blest.
Not so the convict, 'midst the horrid din
Of oaths and strife, in this sad house of sin ;
Not e'en though penitence and prayer should close
His eyes in hope, and promise him repose.
He knows not rest : the horrors of the night
Mix with his dreams, and rouse him with affright.
If, hopeless then of sleep, the book he seeks
Whose pages comfort to the sinner speaks,
And if, in Christian charity and love,
His fellows he admonish or reprove,
Then laughter loud and ridicule prevail—
Loose jests and wanton song his ear assail ;
Then some more daring than the rest deny
Their Maker, and the wrath of heaven defy,
And glory in their crimes, and deeds unfold
Which blanch the cheek, and make the blood run cold.
Nor dwells their converse on the past alone :
Here seeds of future wickedness are sown ;
Here arts of fraud are taught, here leagues are made
Of blackest guilt, and plans of mischief laid.
The young offender with amazement hears
The sins and outrages of riper years ;
But soon familiar grows with every crime—
A veteran in vice while in his prime.

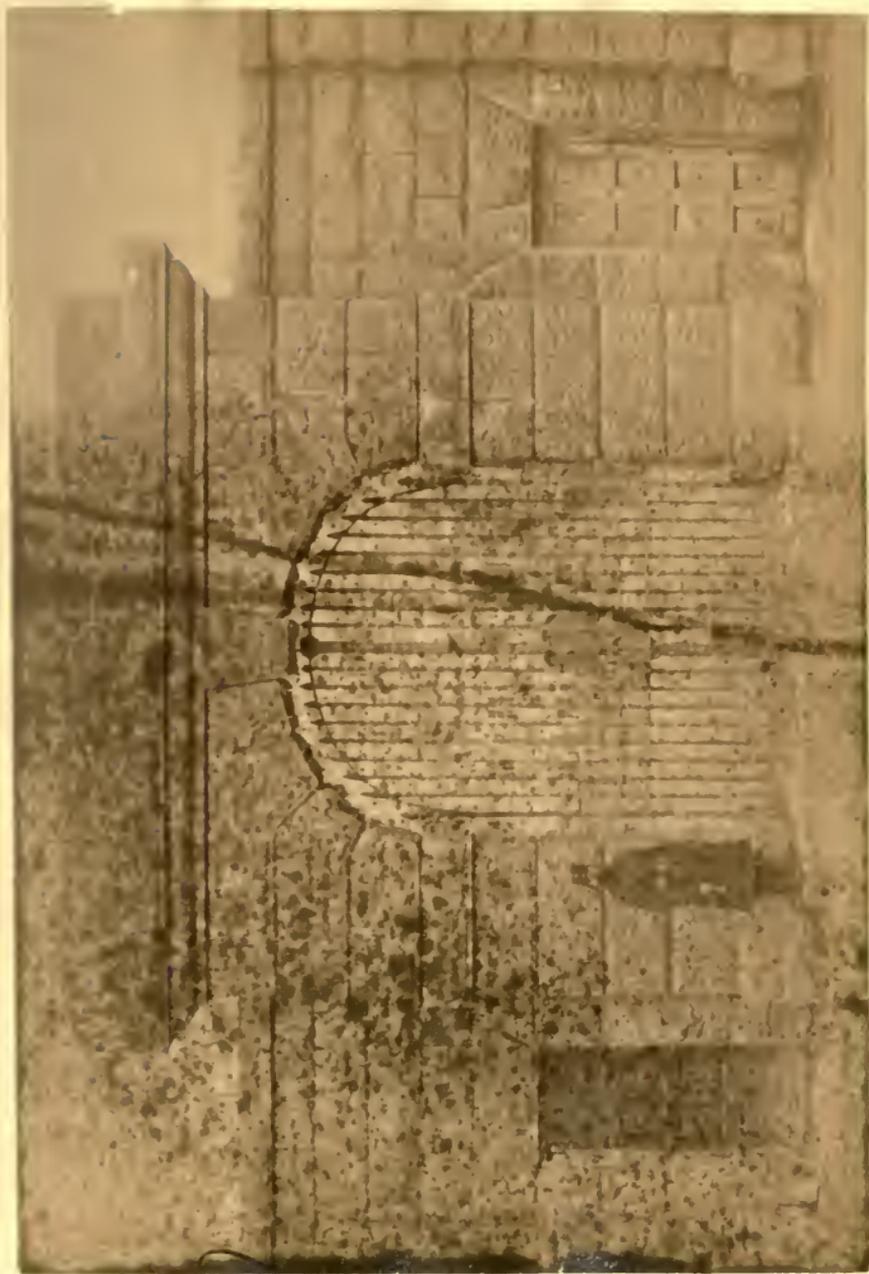
Confine not youth in this abandoned place,
To herd with everything most vile and base.
Let justice rather strike her victim dead
Than send him here the path of sin to tread,
Where vice unblushing tells her grossest tale,
And images obscene are made for sale.
Place not the boy with those who know not shame,
With some whom nature shudders e'en to name ;
Then better doom him to the lions' den
Than to this cursed abode of wicked men."

Several attempts were made from time to time to utilise the spacious prison buildings on Dartmoor, which from disuse had fallen into a state of decay. A company, formed for the purpose of extracting naphtha from the peat soil, had possession of them for some time ; but the scheme was abandoned, probably in consequence of the difficulty in finding a convenient market, and the great cost of production. Another company endeavoured to make coarse paper from the fibrous parts of partly decayed peat, but this enterprise also failed.

Various projects of a public nature were set on foot. One proposal was to collect orphan children from the streets of London and to place them on Dartmoor, under a system of religious and industrial training ; and at a meeting held in London in 1828 it was announced that George IV. had headed the list of subscribers with a gift of £1,000, in addition to an offer of the necessary land for cultivation in connection with the design. For some unexplained reason this admirable plan was never carried out, though started under such favourable auspices. Another proposal for checking the great desire

for emigration was to occupy the buildings, and to undertake the reclamation of the vast tracts of moorland in the vicinity, and thus eventually to bring the whole under cultivation. None of these suggestions were brought to maturity, although the late Prince Consort, ever foremost in his endeavours to benefit his fellow-men, visited the Duchy Estates in 1846, with a view to ascertaining how far the proposed undertaking would be likely to succeed. The remote nature of the locality and the severity of the climate probably convinced him that private enterprise alone could not successfully cope with the natural disadvantages of the district, and that the only sure method of arriving at a satisfactory result would be to re-occupy the prison as a convict station, thereby securing the isolation desirable in a penal settlement, with the advantages to be obtained by the employment of organised labour in turning the waste lands to profitable account.

This view was finally adopted in 1850, and the buildings were again occupied in November of that year by a party of 200 convicts, who were sent in advance to make the necessary alterations for the reception of about 600 men. The constant complaints brought to light by the evils arising from the system followed on board the hulks, led to the modern plan of ensuring the entire separation of prisoners after the hours of labour. In order to adapt the old buildings to more modern requirements, it was found necessary to make considerable alterations in the interior. This was done by entirely removing the floors, and by substituting ranges of cells back to back in the



INNER GATE.

centre of each block, which reached from the ground to the roof. The partitions were of corrugated iron, and although the space allotted to each man was limited, still the requisite isolation was effectually secured.

In the year 1871 a large building, embodying the most recent improvements in construction, was built by convict labour. It has a total length of 292 feet, and is arranged to accommodate 272 prisoners. The cells are in four tiers, and have a cubic space of 590 feet each. The floor of each cell is supported on arched masonry filled in with asphalt.

Upon the completion of this building the total number of prisoners was increased to one thousand. For the control and direction of this body the following officials are employed :

- Governor
- Deputy-Governor
- Chaplain
- Roman Catholic Priest
- Medical Officer
- Assistant-Surgeon
- Steward
- Farm Bailiff
- Chief Warder
- 8 Principal Warders
- 33 Warders
- 66 Assistant-Warders
- 26 Civil Guard
- 4 Labourers
- 2 Night-Watchmen.

In addition to the above, the clerical work is conducted by four schoolmasters and four clerks, who are distributed in the various departments.

The chaplain has the spiritual charge of the Protestants, which he is required to exercise by cellular visitation in addition to the daily chapel services.

The Roman Catholic priest attends to the spiritual wants of his own flock, and performs service daily in the chapel set apart for his use.

The medical officers are resident, and superintend the treatment of prisoners reported sick. They also attend the families of the officials attached to the establishment.

The steward has charge of accounts, clothing, provisions, and stores, and is assisted by a staff of clerks, who record the expenditure in the different branches.

The chief warden is the head of the discipline staff, and is assisted by the

Principal warders, who have charge of districts on the works, and of Halls when the men are inside the walls.

The warders and assistant-warders are next in rank, and have immediate charge of the prisoners. Their duties within the prison consist in supervising the men while in their cells, attending to the serving out of meals, and in patrolling the wards during the night. The nature of the work is most arduous. The officers have always to be on their guard against attack, ever watchful to discover irregularity or escape, besides being responsible for the amount of work done, and for the manner in which it is

carried out. The training for the duties embraces a large field, and may be said to include some acquaintance with the medium employed by criminals in communicating with each other. The following sentences will give some idea of the requirements under this head :

“ I buzzed a bloke on the fly, and nicked his poke with two fin and a quid ; but got bested before the beak, for the copper knew I did the job, and gave me a drag over it.”

“ I got the wedge planted all right ; but the toff made such a song about it, that they got hold of the fence ; and though my pals stumped up for a mouth-piece, I got lagged for a stretch.”

Translated into English, these specimens of criminals' slang read :

“ I picked a man's pocket as he was walking along, and secured his purse, containing two five pound notes and a sovereign ; but when brought before the magistrate I got the worst of it, for the policeman knew that I had committed the offence ; and I received three months' imprisonment in consequence.”

“ I succeeded in concealing the stolen plate ; but the gentleman was so much annoyed at his loss, that the police found out the receiver of stolen property ; and though my companions paid for counsel, I was sentenced to penal servitude.”

The civil guard is composed of men who have served in the army. This body is under arms whenever the

prisoners are assembled together. It also furnishes the outlying sentries for the working parties employed beyond the walls.

The criminals received at this establishment are men who have been sentenced to penal servitude—none less than to five years; some for life. A large proportion of those sent to Dartmoor are convicts who, having some malady or malformation, are rendered unfit for the severe labour at other stations; but who when employed here upon work to which they are accustomed, are capable of producing satisfactory results in all branches of industry. Many are sent to Dartmoor for their health's sake; for in the early stages of chest complaint the climate is most efficacious. The medical officers have from time to time recorded their opinion of the great advantages which are to be derived by phthisical patients from a residence at such an altitude above the sea-level; and the improved condition of the men removed from London and the large manufacturing towns goes far to prove the correctness of their views. In 1811 Dr. Dykan reported that "he is most thoroughly convinced of the salubrity of the climate, in spite of the severity of the seasons." A bracing climate is always advantageous if the patient can bear it; and the elevation above the sea level is of great importance, the moorland air being beneficial on account of its purity and rarefaction.

Each prisoner on arrival is furnished with the following articles :

Hammock and bedding
Table (fixed)

Stool

Books (religious and educational)

Basin and jug (zinc)

Knife and plate (tin)

Pint measure (tin).

He is held responsible for the perfect cleanliness of his cell and its contents at all times, as also for the careful arrangement of the several articles above mentioned. A signal is fitted to the door of each cell, with which the attention of the officer on duty can be attracted in case of sudden illness, or for communicating ordinary wants, such as change of clothing, repairs, &c.

The full working-day is arranged as follows : At 5 a.m. prisoners rise, wash, and clean out cells ; at 5.50 breakfast is issued, consisting of gruel and bread ; at 6.45 they march to chapel, and after service (lasting about fifteen minutes) they parade for labour. Labour continues till 11.10, when, after being searched, they return to their cells for dinner. Dinner consists of boiled meat, suet pudding, or soup, with an allowance of potatoes and bread, the issue for each day being regulated according to scale, class, and description of labour.* At 1.10 p.m. they again assemble for labour, which lasts till 5.15 p.m., when they are again searched, and return to their cells ; after which supper, consisting of cocoa and bread, is served out. During the evening those who are unable to read and write receive instruction from the school-masters attached to the establishment, under whose

* On Sunday the midday meal consists of cheese and bread.

supervision they write letters to their friends at certain fixed periods. The well-educated employ their evening in reading the library books, with which each man is furnished according to his capacity. At 7.45 prisoners retire to rest, all lights being extinguished at 7.55.

There are four classes to which prisoners can attain by good conduct and steady industry. Each step carries with it certain advantages in letter-writing, diet, &c. Each class is distinguished by a particular badge on the collar and cuffs; thus—

3rd Class,	Black
2nd „	Yellow
1st „	Blue
Special „	All Blue.

The highest (all blue) is reserved for exemplary conduct, and can only be obtained within twelve months of final discharge.

By good conduct and industry combined a prisoner may gain a remission of one-fourth of the period he passes on “Public Works.” Each man has in his cell a record of his earnings towards this mitigation of his punishment, which he can consult at any moment. Colonel Du Cane says: “In this manner, day by day, week by week, and year by year, he can count and record the progress he is making towards an advance in class, in accumulation of money (£3 in all), and towards final remission of his punishment; and he is made perfectly to see and feel that his own fate is in his own

hands, and that he has a something to work and hope for beyond the mere avoidance of punishment."

Three months before the expiration of a convict's time preparations are made for his leaving. A photograph is then taken of him, and a record is made of any additional means of identification since his conviction, such as results of accidents. A complete outfit of clothes is also provided for him. A week before leaving he is permitted to write to his friends, that they may know of his approaching release, and be prepared, if so minded, to help him with funds or with employment. When liberated an officer of the establishment escorts him to the railway station, where a warrant, enabling him to obtain a ticket for the place of his conviction, is handed to him. An instalment of the gratuity he has earned during his penal service is given to him at the same time; and when seen into the train the immediate responsibilities of the department end. The other instalments of his gratuity are paid to him through the police, to whom he has periodically to report himself according to the conditions of his licence. Before leaving the prison every convict is informed of the existence and objects of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, and urged to seek its assistance in case of need.

The different industries carried on are—

Farming and cattle breeding,
Shoemaking,
Tailoring,
Stone cutting,

Masons' work,
Blacksmiths' work,
Carpenters' work,
Quarrying.

In the tailors' shop the prisoners make the uniforms of the officers of this prison and of one or more prisons in the London district, besides a large quantity of clothing for the Metropolitan police. Those in the shoemakers' shop, besides boots for those connected with the prison, make boots for the Metropolitan police. All the tradesmen's work about the prison and its adjuncts is done by the convicts, and there is always building going on to occupy a considerable number.

In addition to these employments, the reclamation of waste land forms an important feature in the returns, and affords constant work for about 200 men. A large tract has lately been enclosed, which will take at least ten years to lay out in fields, with suitable roads and water-courses.

The cultivation of the already enclosed lands, extending to about 1,000 acres, is next in importance. These lands are for the most part laid down in grass for hay and grazing purposes, and give a yearly return of about £4 per acre. The most assiduous attention is however required to prevent the pasture land from producing moss, which not only consumes the feeding qualities of the soil, but drives out the permanent grasses, allowing rushes and the original coarse sedgy grass to reappear.

Roots are grown to a considerable extent for stall

feeding in winter. The land and climate are well adapted for these crops, and the yield will compare favourably with that of lowland farms. Cereals are not so much to be depended upon, although in some seasons oats and barley will ripen well. As a rule, however, marketable samples of grain cannot be looked for, owing to the climate, temperature, and shortness of the summer. The soil is of a peaty nature, upon clay, marl, and granitic subsoils. By good cultivation it soon assumes a dark loam colour, and when in this state can be made to bear profitably almost any description of farm produce. To attain this condition the land is first well trenched to the depth of from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet, all rocks are removed, and it is thoroughly drained, to depths and at distances varying according to the subsoil. A liberal dressing of lime is then given with the first crop in order to convert the half-decayed vegetable matter into food for the roots of the plants. An analysis of the soil prior to reclamation shows an entire absence of lime, and to this defect is due the high cost of bringing moorlands under cultivation for the first time. On some parts of the land peat is found in large quantities; this when dried forms excellent fuel, and is also used for making gas.

The live stock, consisting of North Devon and Polled Scotch cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, and ponies, are all bred and brought to maturity on the spot, and without being sent to the low country for any part of the year. This proves the fallacy of the argument pressed by most moorland farmers, that it is necessary to send stock away for change. The change on the prison farm is given in

the shape of roots and hay grown on well-drained and manured lands, artificial food in sufficient quantities, and by attending carefully to the housing of the animals. Although the breeding of fancy stock is not encouraged, prizes for sheep and cattle have been awarded at the county exhibitions.

Horse breeding was introduced some years ago with satisfactory results, and to this branch has recently been added a herd of Dartmoor ponies, which by careful selection of sires and attention to feeding bids fair to become remunerative.

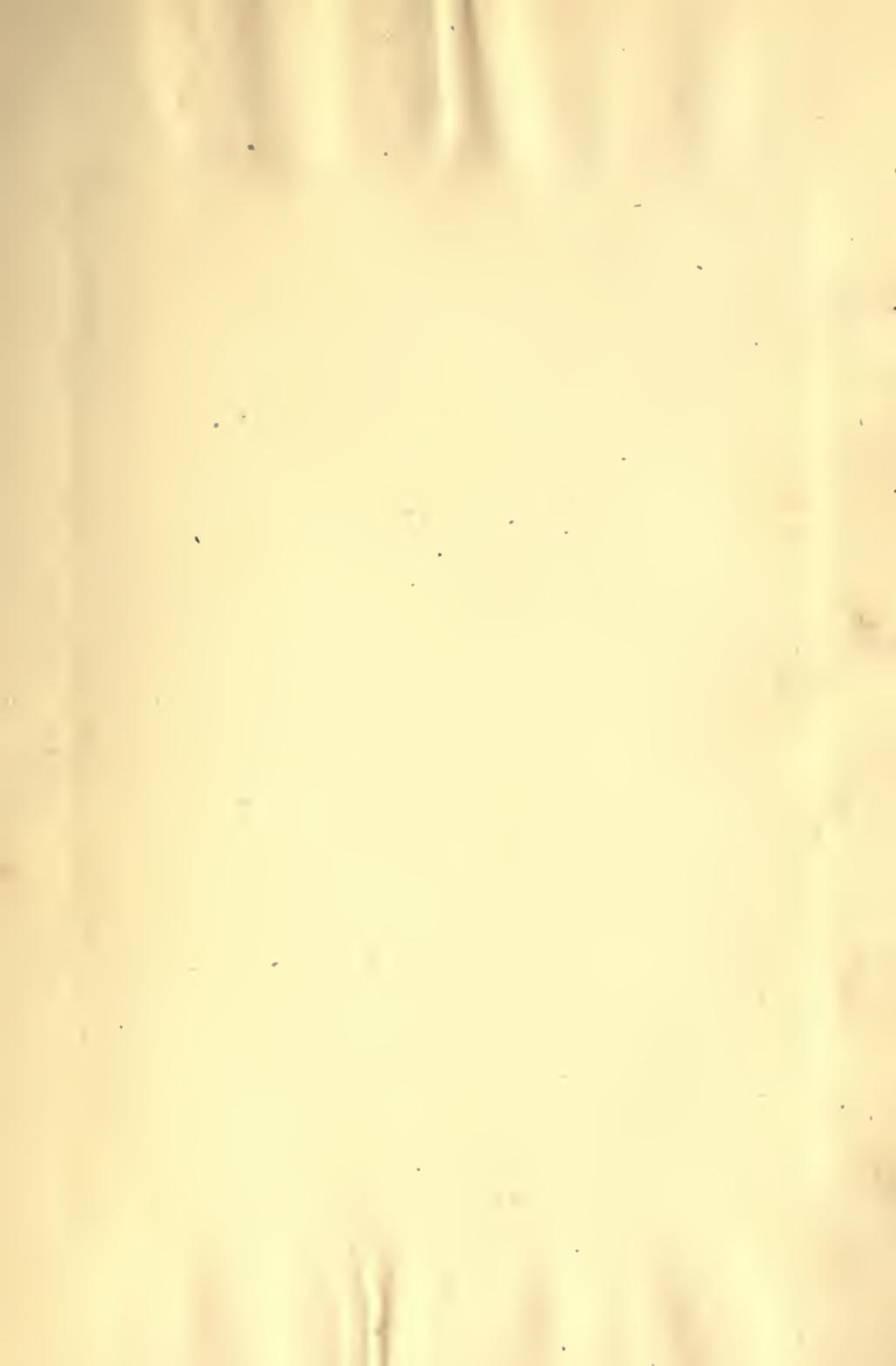
Fifty cows are kept, from which the establishment is supplied with dairy produce.

Attached to the farm are thirty-two acres of garden ground, from which the establishment and the officials are supplied with vegetables. The crops produced are of excellent quality, and sustain a well-earned reputation at the neighbouring exhibitions.

The work of reclaiming land, cultivating the farm and gardens, and attending to live stock, is done by convict labour, the whole being under the direction of an experienced bailiff, who devotes his time to the supervision of the various details.

The objections which have from time to time been raised to the system of working convicts together in parties are met by Colonel Du Cane* in the following passage: "Perpetual seclusion in a cell for years, with no communication with his fellows, is an artificial state of existence so absolutely opposed to that which nature

* *Penal Servitude*, 1872.





MODERN PRISON. "No. 5."

points out as the condition of mental, moral, and physical health, and so entirely unlike that which a man is to be prepared to follow on his discharge from prison, that it cannot be expected to fulfil the required object. We must bear in mind that the prisoner should not only be punished and *taught* what is right, but should be returned to society fitted both morally and physically to perform his proper duties in the battle of life."

With reference to the value of the work performed by convicts, Captain Percy Smith, R.E., says,* "There are many buildings erected by convicts which stand side by side with, and cannot be distinguished from, similar works built by civilians. The advantages of employing convicts on works are obvious. The hard work necessary for their punishment is made reproductive, it improves them physically, and is not of such a nature as to make them dogged and prevent mental improvement. They acquire habits of industry, and in many instances pick up a trade, or such knowledge of work that they qualify themselves to earn an honest living when their sentences expire."

Probably none are brought into closer intimacy with the convicts, or have more opportunity of studying their characteristics, than the medical officers, whose duties are sufficiently onerous, since those with whom they have to deal within the walls are most expert in malinger- ing, or endeavouring to evade work by feigning affliction or sickness—a feature entirely distinct from the ordinary cases of indisposition to which any large popu-

* *Penal Servitude.* By Colonel Du Cane, C.B.

lation must of necessity be liable. The persistence with which the criminal class will feign sickness with this object is out of all proportion to the gain to be derived from such impostures; and the determination with which they will persist in trying to carry out the deception often appears incredible. Among the many cases occurring from time to time, the following may serve to illustrate this peculiarity: A man met with an injury of a trifling nature by falling against his bed, and he was taken to the hospital, complaining of severe pains in the back, and exhibiting all the symptoms of paralysis of the lower half of the body. He appeared perfectly helpless; pretended that he could not turn in bed without assistance, and was carried daily to the exercise yard. At length, after keeping up this deception for nearly three years, and after every kind of remedy had been tried to alleviate his supposed sufferings, he one day threw down the crutches furnished to him before the astonished doctor, saying, "There, you may take them; I have had enough of them for the present." During the years this imposture lasted the man was most insolent and abusive to the medical staff, who were doing their best to lighten what was thought to be his afflicted condition.

A man supposed to have the bones of his foot diseased was found, after many months of careful treatment, to have two large needles bound round with thread imbedded in a wound above the instep, upon the removal of which he at once recovered.

Some cases are marked by great cunning and perse-

verance as well as self-inflicted pain. The astonishing determination of one man, who, though detected, continued the same line of conduct for many months, deserves notice. This man, after nearly losing his leg by running a piece of copper wire into the knee, produced a number of sores round the knee joint, and kept up a great degree of swelling and inflammation by means of rag and thread pushed into the wounds. Upon the discovery of this he introduced lime below the skin. On another occasion a bandage was found firmly bound round the thigh, the result being "extensive swelling and lividity of the leg." A large piece of gutta percha made to envelope the limb also failed to check his propensity, as by means of a strip of sheeting, and the skewer with which part of his diet was attached, he produced a tourniquet, with which the leg was compressed during the night, thus neutralizing any good effects produced by the treatment pursued during the day. The imposture was at last detected by an order to expose the limb outside the bed-clothes to the view of the officer by day and night, and from that hour progress was made towards complete recovery.

Imbecility, paralysis, fits, spitting of blood, and bleeding from the nose, are the ailments most frequently feigned; but a hand or leg retained in a particular position for a length of time, resulting in the loss of the power of again using it, is not uncommon. Dr. Guy, when before a Commission in 1863, mentioned the case of a man who sewed up his mouth and eyelids with a needle and thread with a view to prove his insanity,

after failing to produce the required impression by less violent measures.

Another form of imposition among convicts is to excite sympathy, or gain a certain object, by a pretended attempt to commit suicide. This has its dangers, and is sometimes attended with serious results. Perhaps the most determined instance of self-inflicted injury of this kind is recorded by Dr. Clarke, affording as it does a fit subject for psychological study. During a previous sentence a prisoner had incurred repeated punishment for misconduct. He feigned insanity in a borough gaol; he affected to be palsied before the judge who tried him; and although he arrived without a sign of disordered intellect, he soon commenced a course of malingering. The usual routine in these cases is to destroy books, clothing or bedding, and the glass of the windows. Refusal of food then follows to the point when, if the abstinence is persistent, hospital treatment becomes a necessity. This man not only passed through the whole of these stages, but he added muteness to his other eccentricities; and in order to guard against any new phase in his conduct, he was placed under more constant observation. Whether the restraint of close surveillance became irksome, or whether he despaired of success in his imposture, is questionable; but after other symptoms of amendment, he assured the doctor on the day before his death that he had resigned the attempt to feign insanity. All the ordinary precautions to frustrate suicide continued to be taken, and yet on the following night he succeeded in strangling himself by means of a bandage

round his neck tied to a looped sheet, in the bight of which he placed his feet, and by extending them tightened the ligature. The act was unexampled for cunning and determination. Covered by his bed-clothes, and refraining from any noise, he appeared to the officer on night duty, who passed and repassed throughout the night in full view of him, to be sleeping naturally. A *post mortem* examination revealed a healthy condition of the brain.

Constant vigilance is necessarily exacted from the executive officers; for the idea of seizing on some favourable opportunity to escape is ever present to the minds of the young and active.

Two men who effected their escape were recaptured after a severe chase by a farmer, his son, and a constable, in the parish of South Tawton. They maltreated the constable, striking him on the head and face with a large stone tied in a handkerchief; they also kicked the farmer severely. At the village where they were taken the inhabitants sided with them, and attempted their rescue. They also supplied them with tobacco and beer to such an extent that one of the prisoners was quite drunk when finally secured.

It is related of one convict that he tore up a small piece of the flooring of his cell, and with a nail found in the wood, and a piece of wire, succeeded in loosening the mortar of the wall, while by using the wood as a lever he effected the removal of the stones, one or two being very large. His rug and blankets had been carefully arranged on the floor to catch the falling mortar and stones, and to deaden sound. He was discovered

just as he had succeeded in making a hole sufficiently large to creep through.

Three others attempted to escape on the night of 10th December. One first removed the glass of his cell window, unlocked his door with a false key, and then released his companions. They made their way to the lobby leading to the store with the view of forcing their way through the trap door ; but were unable to do so, in consequence of the door being secured by a bolt on the outside, which they could not reach. These typical cases sufficiently indicate the cunning and resource of the convicts, and the imperative need of wariness on the part of those responsible for their safe custody.



LINES ON A GRAVESTONE AT DARTMOOR.*

BENEATH this plain and silent stone,
Which hath no name engraved thereon—
No words of Holy Writ, to tell
To passers-by what here befell—
The convict's worn and ragged form
Lies sheltered from life's bitter storm.
That storm of sin and misery,
Now hushed, hath set the prisoner free.
No other sickness shook his frame
But anguish for his tainted name :
He drooped whene'er he thought upon
His distant wife, his helpless son.
What though his frailties dreadful were,
His punishment was hard to bear ;
Cut off, like Cain, from every tie
That sweetens life, 'twas bliss to die.
Cast no uncharitable stone
At him, as if he sinned alone ;
But weep a brother's fate ; for grace
Alone hath saved *thee* from his place.

* *Widdecombe-in-the-Moor.* By R. Dymond.

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